(Copy.)

Leicester, October 20. 1846.

Rev. A. P. Peabody

My dear Sir,

I received, about a fortnight since, your draught of a letter in reply to the Irish Letter, and, having taken a copy, sent it forward to other members of the Committee. Probably, by this time, it ~~may~~ has returned to you; and I will ask your permission to state one or two objections to it, which lie in my mind.

~~And with regard to the 2d paragraph, I think, with Bro. Simmons, that there is no call to urge the Unitns. of England & Ireland to efforts against all the restrictions in their country placed on religious liberty; but I should not press this point, as one of any great importance; I do not see much objection to the paragraph, as you have written it.~~

Passing to ~~Touching~~ the 3d paragraph, I cannot agree with you that "our position, &c. are greatly misunderstood by our trans-atlantic friends." I have reason to believe that these ~~position is~~ things are pretty well understood; and with much clearness & accuracy, by ~~others~~ some of them. In part proof ~~confirmation~~ of this, I have the pleasure to send you a tract on "American Slavery & the Abolition Movement" recently ~~issued~~ published at Bristol by John B. Estlin Esqr., a surgeon of eminence, ~~& a man greatly~~ and highly respected as a man in that city, and, through his life, a firm & prominent Unitarian. It is surprisingly free from inaccuracies, considering how closely & almost entirely it aims to deal ~~wit~~ facts ~~even with regard to less important points~~. — Again,

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in the 2d sentence of this paragraph, you indirectly allege that "the publications issued & sustained by the great AntiSlavery organizations in this country" are not reliable sources of accurate information. To this sentiment, I am unable to subscribe.

You afterwards ~~affirm~~ say, in same paragraph, that there are but "very few of our body" who have not publicly taken, ~~more or less~~, an AntiSlavery position — I do not quote the very words. I think this remark would convey to our Irish correspondents an ~~very~~ incorrect impression. We have, according to published lists, about 280 Unitarian ministers, actual and retired, and of these, after [illegible] [illegible] strenuous efforts, 173 signed the late "Protest," giving at least 100 who refused. I gladly acknowledge, that, among those who signed, are ~~large~~ many prominent names, and that it includes some who have done something else against Slavery beside signing that Protest; but is it not true that very many - perhaps a majority - of those, who signed that paper, are not known to have 2. testified 1. otherwise in public their opposition to Slavery? Then, what names, long considered as ~~leading, as the first names~~ foremost among American Unitarians, are wanting on that Protest! I need ~~&~~ not make a Catalogue! I need not refer to the position, taken & frankly ~~taken~~ avowed by Dr. Gannett, ~~tacitly~~ ~~practised~~ practically maintained by so many, that silence is the duty of Unitarians, & of the North, as to Slavery! I could ~~enlarge~~ say more on this ~~point~~ paragraph - but ~~it is hardly needful~~ at present will not.

I can, by no means, agree that "Massachusetts and New Hampshire occupy as decidedly an Anti-Slavery position as they can without separating from the Federal Union" (though this might be the case, without showing *them* to be in an A-Slavery position). Neither of these States have made ~~any~~ ~~[illegible]~~ a steady & firm opposition to the ~~Mexican War~~ annexation of Texas, and to the War with Mexico, both of these undertaken, avowedly ~~prosecuted~~ in behalf of Slavery. On the contrary, both have consented to annexation and remain partners in the wrong; both have aided the ~~[illegible]~~ War to the full ~~extent~~ of the Presidential *request* - ~~remember, it was~~ for it was only a *request* and not a *demand*, and there was of course no *obligation* to *volunteer*! ~~was not Constitutionally binding, for that reason~~. —

Moreover, Massachusetts, at least, had openly declared that annexation of T. was ~~unconstitutional~~ a flagrant *violation* of the Constitution — ; and *therefore* she ~~ought to have lent the war no aid, but to have steadily refused it~~ was bound, in honor and consistency, as a faithful member of the "Federal Union", to have refused all aid to the War.

Massachusetts has deserted her post - the position to which she had come; and Gov. Briggs & R. C. Winthrop (in my judgment) are more guilty than any other two men, in the case. God grant that she, with many sister States, may rally, before it is too late. The late ~~case~~ ~~of the~~ abduction-case, in ~~of the Slave from~~ Boston proves, I submit, that your statement is too strong as to the "moral impossibility" of taking back from the North a fugitive slave to his chains & stripes.

In general, my dear Sir, my objection to the letter is that its tone is too much in apology for, and even justification of, our position as Unitarians, and as men. Remember ~~[illegible]~~ the determined & ~~[illegible]~~ successful opposition, in the A. U. A.

Last May, to the appointment of a Committee barely to answer this Irish letter; and on the trivial plea that it was not specifically addressed to the Assocn. Remember that Dr. Parkman openly declared that no letter, on the subject of Slavery, should go forth from the Amn. Unitn. Association; ~~and it is undeniable that~~

remember the undisguised contempt & hatred (I think I use not terms too strong) with which very many of our leading men still speak of the entire Antislavery movement; remember the suspicion, jealousy & distrust still manifested by nearly the whole denomination, lay & clerical, towards those of their number who have made themselves at all conspicuous in this movement; — remember these, and very many like things, which have been, and which have not ceased, and you will perceive some of the grounds on which I think your letter too apologetic.

I can only say, in conclusion, that I sincerely hope that you will write a letter which will meet with our hearty and unanimous concurrence. May I venture to say to you "Try again" knowing, as I do, that you will not be offended at the plainness with which I have expressed the above objections.

~~that such cannot be the case. May I venture to express the hope that you will not be discouraged, but will "try again"? Please preserve this, for reference, in case we should have another Committee meeting~~

With respect & affection,

I am, Your brother, Samuel May Jr

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